Leaked internal document reveals Facebook wanted special scrutiny of Candace Owens's background, ideology, looking for reasons to ban her

By Thomas Lifson

Facebook is being exposed as a naked propaganda organ that ought to be treated by law as a "publisher" legally responsible for the content it hosts, and not as a "forum" — the status it currently enjoys, exempting it from libel laws and other downsides to the content it spreads out to the world.

A must-read article in the Epoch Times by Petr Svab documents to shocking effort undertaken by Mark Zuckerberg's propaganda operation.

> Facebook has encouraged some of its employees to probe the background of conservative commentator Candace Owens for anything that could give the social media giant grounds to kick her off its platforms, an internal Facebook document described and partially leaked to Breitbart indicates.
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> The document is a spreadsheet on "Policy Review" of what the company calls "hate agents." It was created in early April and was related to prominent figures recently banned from the platform, a Facebook spokesperson said. Owens was listed on the document

> under the note, "Extra Credit (We should look into these after we're done with the above designation analysis)." The spokesperson believed Owens hadn't yet been investigated.

Owens already has been subjected to suspension on what appears to be ideological grounds:

> Dear @realDonaldTrump,
>
> My @facebook page has been suspended for 7 days for posting that white supremacy is not a threat to black America, as much as father absence and & liberal policies that incentivize it, are.
>
> I am censored for posting the poverty rates in fatherless homes. pic.twitter.com/Yh9DSW6DPk
>
> — Candace Owens (@RealCandaceO) May 17, 2019
>
> A Facebook spokesperson said the account was suspended by mistake and restored later that day. The suspension was unrelated to the internal document, the spokesperson said.
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> The document indicated that Facebook employees were to look into what Owens is "known for," including her "ideology, actions, major news, etc."
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> They were also supposed to list "Affiliated Hate Entities" of Owens. The spokesperson didn't respond to questions on what Facebook considers a "Hate Entity," what constitutes an affiliation, and how can users avoid such affiliations. (snip)

> Facebook maintains that it doesn't look at people's political views when deciding whom to ban, but its Community Standards are, to a degree, a partisan manifesto. The standards heavily focus on suppressing "hate speech," even though Americans are divided sharply along political lines on what does and doesn't constitute "hateful" speech, a 2017 Cato survey (pdf) showed.

Senator Josh Hawley is leading the charge to get to the bottom of the ideological thumb on the scale at Facebook. Robby Soave at Reason wrote last March:

> In his brief remarks Friday at the Conservative Political Action Conference, Sen. Josh Hawley (R–Mo.) accused "big tech" companies of discriminating against conservative voices — and called for the government to do something about it.
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> Hawley was interviewed on the CPAC main stage by The Wall Street Journal's Kimberly Strassel. He made clear that he believed purportedly anti-conservative big tech companies needed to be regulated.
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> "Google and Facebook should not be a law unto themselves," he said. "They should not be able to discriminate against conservatives. They should not be able to tell conservatives to sit down and shut up."
>
> Hawley's proposed solution to this problem — which is not, in fact, a solution at all — is to meddle with Section 230 of the Communications Decency Act, which shields internet platforms from certain sorts of lawsuits. Section 230 treats companies like Facebook and Twitter as neutral platforms rather than publishers; if someone posts a libelous comment on Facebook, that person can be sued, but

> Facebook cannot. It is no overstatement to say that Section 230 is what allows the internet to exist in its current form. If content providers were to lose this protection, they would invariably default toward censoring all kinds of speech.
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> Thus, it is not at all obvious that an internet without Section 230 would be friendlier to conservative viewpoints, since this would actually give platforms even more cause to police speech. Strassel raised this issue with Hawley, saying "there are libertarians and some conservatives who say if you change Section 230, if you impose liability on them for anything anybody says there, they are going to go after even more conservative voices."

I disagree with Robby on the usefulness of this move. I think it would push Facebook and other social media to take a hands-off approach and let any content at all post — acting as a true forum. If there are worries about terrorists and other criminals, let law enforcement handle those issues. The solution to bad speech is not censorship, but rather more speech.

That would also be a sound business decision, lowering the cost of operation of Facebook, which could fire its legions of censors.